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CLAPP
BELOVED PHYSICIAN

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The Beloved Physician.

REV. A. H. CLAPP'S SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

JOSEPH WARREN FEARING, M. D.

DUE TWO WEEKS FROM LAST DATE

S MAR 7 1955

THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN.

A SERMON

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

JOSEPH WARREN FEARING, M. D.:

PREACHED IN THE

BENEFICENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, PROVIDENCE,

DECEMBER 7th, 1862,

BY

REV. A. HUNTINGTON CLAPP.

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MY FRIEND,
JOSEPH WARREN FEARING, M. D.,
DIED

MONDAY EVENING, (9:30) NOVEMBER 24, 1862,

AGED 62 YEARS.

“With us their names shall live
Through long, succeeding years,
Embalmed with all our hearts can give,
Our praises and our tears.”

S E R M O N .

“LUKE, THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN, AND DEMAS GREET YOU.”—*Colossians* iv : 14.

LUKE and Demas had been Paul's traveling companions on many a weary journey and voyage, in the service of the Gospel.

They were now his attendants in the Roman prison, whence he wrote this letter to the Christians at Colosse ; and their salutations to those brethren, the apostle couples with his own.

Demas, you remember, tired of the service, yielded to stronger attractions from “this present world,” and forsook the apostle, some time between the writing of this letter and the second to Timothy.

But Luke remained with him, faithful to the last ; ministering to his bodily ailments, and helping in every way his various apostolic labors.

The apostle always mentions Luke with honor and affection ; but this time in terms so peculiar as at once to attract attention—“Luke, *the beloved physician.*”

THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN. From the many important relations which Luke had sustained to him, why did Paul single this—of his secular profession—as *the* one by which to characterize his friend and co-laborer?

Luke was one of the one hundred and twenty on whom the Holy Spirit, at Pentecost, descended in cloven tongues of flame. He was, no doubt, one of the two to whom Christ manifested himself in the road to Emmaus, on the day of his ascension. His Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, written by him, show that he was by far the most learned, minutely correct and observing of all the early Christian historians.

Probably he first met Paul and labored with him at Antioch. In company with Silas and Timothy, he set sail with the apostle from Troas, to plant Christianity in heathen Europe. With Timothy, he remained in care of the church at Philippi, after Paul and Silas passed on; and there Paul finds him again on his second visit to Macedonia, in his third missionary journey. Again, they sail in company for Troas; labor together there, and at Assos, at Miletus, at Tyre, at Cæsarea, and at Jerusalem, where he writes his Gospel.

From Jerusalem, he goes with Paul sent under arrest, back to Cæsarea; accompanies him thence to Rome, and, as we have seen, stands by him till his martyrdom.

This connection between the Apostle and the Evangelist could scarcely have been of less than fifteen or twenty years' duration. It had been marked by many most affecting incidents; it had brought out many noble traits of the Evangelist's character. Yet, when Paul would speak of him to mutual friends, he does not

say—Luke, the scholar; Luke, the historian; Luke, the companion of our Lord; Luke, one of the favored witnesses of the ascension; Luke, the sharer of my years of missionary travel; but—“Luke, *the beloved physician!*”

No reader of the Acts need be told that of all the evangelist's traits, one of the most marked was his modesty.

So far from magnifying himself, he never speaks of his own labors, and “we only trace his movements in connection with Paul, by the change of a pronoun, or the unconscious variation of his style.”

Had another written of the planting and early training of the church, we might have lost in many respects, but we should, no doubt, have heard more of Luke.

The most we know of him, we have to gather from scriptural hints and inferences, and from meagre traditions.

He is believed to have been a native of Antioch, a city second only to Alexandria in the fame of its medical schools. Here he doubtless learned his profession.

It has been plausibly urged that he exercised his medical and surgical skill on board the vessels trading and conveying passengers between the ports that dotted the European and Asiatic shores of the Mediterranean. However that may have been, his profession must have largely aided his zeal for Christianity, opening the way for him to travel through these cities, and furnishing favorable opportunities to labor in them. To this incident in the earliest diffusion of the Gospel, the subsequent history of Christian missions has furnished many counterparts—medical skill opening the door for spiritual healing.

Indeed, our Saviour himself may be said to have given the hint in this matter, to his servants, in his practice of ministering first to the bodily diseases of his followers, that so he might find the way to their hearts.

But besides this general advantage which his medical knowledge and skill gave the evangelist, it was unquestionably the occasion of his close association, through so many years, with the apostle. For that mighty soul, you know, was imprisoned in a feeble body, tormented with a painful chronic disease—"a thorn in the flesh," he called it,—“the messenger of Satan to buffet him.” This must have made a skillful, like-minded and loving medical companion, a most acceptable, if not indispensable, ally.

And now, in writing this letter, his mind must have gone back over years of suffering. He recalled the physical distresses that had fallen to his lot, commencing with that initiatory blindness at Damascus; and which—besides excessive labors, cares, weariness, painfulness, watchings, hunger, thirst and nakedness—included scourgings, stonings, shipwrecks and countless perils on land and sea. He remembered the sickness which overtook him on his journey through Galatia, leading him to preach the Gospel there, contrary to his intention. He has in mind, too, that constant weakness and daily exposure to death, of which he speaks so touchingly in his second letter to the Corinthians. He could not but reflect, in how many of these distresses, and for how long a time, Luke had been a partaker with him; and the deepest sentiment of his heart comes readiest to his pen, giving, as the most expressive title of his friend—*The Beloved Physician*.

Many of the infant church of that time, moreover,

poor, and rejected of their heathen or Jewish friends, for their new faith, had, doubtless, shared with the apostle the benefits of Luke's skill. This gave added force and propriety to the name. It was not to Paul alone, but to the christian brotherhood, that Luke was The Beloved Physician.

And, as was intimated concerning later fields of missionary labor, so all may have observed of christian churches generally, how carefully God has provided for them,—giving to each associated body of believers some one, who, adding the ties of christian fellowship to those of grateful affection for professional aid, wins the esteem of many fraternal hearts, as Luke won that of Paul and the Christian Brethren.

For many years—through more than the life-time of most of you—*this* church had its Beloved Physician. Alas, that we must say—we *had*! Can it be that he is with us no more? The cessation of those earnest prayers that went up for him from so many, during his painful sickness; the tears of regret, of grateful love and affectionate memory, which fell as the word went round that he was dead; the throng that pressed to pay the last tribute at his funeral; the anxious inquiry—"Where shall we look for another like him?"—these will not let us forget that he has gone.

Many have indulged in the full luxury of grief over his departure; have felt that for one so long and closely associated with them and their households, they were right in giving way to tears without restraint.

But shall this be all?

Profitable, as well as pleasant, was he to us in life; shall he not be profitable to us also in his death?

His influence with you, your affection for him, the tenderness of your memory of him, came not by chance. They may partially, at least, be traced to their sources. Others of his profession—and to some extent of all professions—may avail themselves of similar means and methods.

That which made him beloved of this church, as a Christian physician, was indeed the Master's work in him. But Christ used the church—he used all our friend's patients and associates, as His instruments. By pleasant or trying influences upon his character, we all contributed more or less to make him the man he was. So it may be with another.

Will it not, then, profit us all—physicians and patients—under the shadow of this bereavement, to look at a few of *the avenues to a people's affection and confidence, that are open to their medical adviser—opportunities which the best exercise of his profession gives him, for securing in their esteem, a place as The Beloved Physician.*

And as we pass these in brief review, my hearers can decide for themselves how far our lamented Doctor FEARING availed himself of them; what lineaments of the portrait are drawn from *him*, and what, if any, from fancy.

For I would not knowingly allow my grateful affection for him to color one feature too highly.

I would not do his sacred memory the injustice of a flattering eulogy.

A most obvious door to popular confidence and affec-

tion opens to the physician, in the very character of his profession.

It is—*The conscientious use of his learning, skill, experience, in the mitigating and relieving of suffering.*

All who have endured great physical suffering, and have experienced the joy of relief, at the hands of those to whom God gives power over disease and pain, know the spontaneous gratitude that such relief calls forth to him who brings it.

They can sympathize with the apostle in the full emotion that found utterance in his words—*The Beloved Physician.*

And how much there is in the manner of administering this relief.

Two surgeons may perform an operation—two physicians may manage a critical case—with equal skill; but if one does it with the cold indifference of a stranger, and the other with the solicitous tenderness of a brother, patients and their friends will not be long in choosing between them. Harshness of manner does not necessarily promote, nor does gentleness of manner necessarily prevent, that steadiness of nerve, that unflinching thoroughness, on which the sufferer's life may depend. It is not the want of sympathetic feeling, but the control of it, that is needful, in the severer duties of the profession. Who that has ever suffered, doubts that there is as much difference in healing power, as there is in comfort, between that harshness, impatience, and obvious want of sympathy, which—no matter what amount of skill may be behind them—are scarcely less trying than pain itself; and the light tread, the subdued voice, the soft hand of a mother, sister, wife?

And where, with undoubted medical skill, is blended

a thoughtful kindness like theirs, a hearty tenderness of sympathy that stands the test of years, can we wonder if he who exhibits it becomes, in his patients' esteem, the *Beloved Physician*?

Another open door to the peculiar esteem of his patients, the physician has, in *his identification with their family history*.

He is present on occasions of the deepest domestic interest—at the birth of children ; through the ailments that beset them, in which life often hangs anxiously in the balance between hope and despair ; and then in the more serious sicknesses of later years.

Few men are so *trusted*. His counsel is sought, in matters that are properly concealed from all others without the family circle.

If, in respect to these confidences, his is “the soul of honor,”—if time proves him worthy of the trust,—how can it be but that the love of the household shall centre warmly in him ? He comes to be regarded as “one of the family ;” and as such, shares the esteem of each of its members. Thus, there open to him opportunities of co-operating both with parents and children ; forwarding, by valuable advice and assistance, not only the physical, but the intellectual and moral well-being of households, especially of their younger members.

How many of the young have been saved from moral wreck by the timely advice of judicious physicians—teaching them to avoid the evils to which they are exposed, and to ensure the wisest and most profitable use of all the powers of body, mind and heart—eternity only can reveal.

When this connection has continued for many years, and the same kind adviser and helper has been with a family from its commencement, in hours of anxiety over their sick, and of sorrow over their dead; has stood with them by their cradles of infancy, their beds of languishing, and by the open grave; when parents, as they look on each other or on their children, call to mind instances in which *he* was God's instrument in saving precious life sorely imperiled—perhaps despaired of—do we not readily see how full of meaning, in such a home, becomes the apostle's phrase, “the *Beloved Physician* !”

Another door to peculiar esteem, open for the physician, is in *The frequent calls made on him for the dispensation of charity.*

The sick and suffering must seek medical relief from some source. It is not in human nature to suffer long without an effort for alleviation. No amount of pride or self-reliance will long hold out against the cry of anguished nature for a remedy.

The poor, through a sense of necessity, of honor, or of pride, may dispense with many of the so-called necessities of life; the product of many forms of labor and skill. They may do without the aid of the lawyer, or the spiritual care of the christian pastor; but let sickness befall, and they must have the physician.

So it happens, that while to others come only a portion of the poor of a community, its body of Physicians are likely, sooner or later, to be conversant with them all.

It may well be questioned, whether any individuals of the community, except its pastors, compare with its

physicians, in the frequency of calls on them for gratuitous aid. And—to their credit be it cheerfully spoken—as a class, none are more ready to render it.

The note-books recording the daily visits of many of the medical fraternity would tell a tale, in this regard, at once creditable to them, and likely to bring a blush to the cheeks of many with equal or greater facilities for doing good to the needy.

Where these professional services are gratuitously rendered to a family, for years, with undiminished faithfulness; where to these are added frequent gifts from his own purse, and this with the unostentatious quiet of the giver who lets not his left hand know what his right hand doeth, he may well come to be regarded in that humble abode, as *The Beloved Physician*.

Another door to special regard, open for the physician, is, *His opportunities to comfort the sick with Religious Instruction and Prayer*.

That the calls for this kind of service are very frequent, every physician of large practice will freely admit.

A patient's disturbed, anxious mind, often thwarts medical skill, neutralizes the best remedies. Physicians are called to many who are connected with no religious congregation, have no pastor, no christian friend; who are too ignorant of religious things to comprehend the way of salvation, but not too ignorant to know that they are sinners, and need some preparation to meet God in peace.

Then, again, they are called to minister to *christian* patients, suddenly smitten by accidents, or who by an unsuccessful surgical operation, or unlooked-for change

of their disease, are in a moment brought to look death in the face, and there is no time to send for pastor or praying friend. How happy, if the physician himself be also a christian brother, ready to speak a word of cheer, to point the dying to Christ, and with the prayer of faith, to lay the chilling, stiffening hand in His who promises to lead the departing believer through the valley of the shadow of death.

Nor are these the only opportunities.

The ordinary cases of sickness afford a wide field to him who is watchful of opportunities for doing good.

Sickness that is not supposed to be threatening, often works a great change in men. It opens the ear and rouses the heart of the careless.

This world, as seen from a sick bed, wears a very different aspect from that it carries about our familiar places of business, our haunts of amusement or frivolity.

And the physician who seeks to improve such an opportunity, is not subject to the suspicion of prejudice, which so often meets and foils a pastor. With him, it is not a professional, but a friendly service.

He will not be suspected of sinister ends, who, in his medical capacity, is giving constant proofs of deep personal interest in the welfare of his patient.

Religious instruction and prayer from him, under these circumstances, can hardly fail of good—it may have saving—effect. At all events, if he honestly offers it, and so seeks to confer the greatest benefit one man can do another, will he not deserve, and be likely to receive, the name of The Beloved Physician?

I will not carry further—as I might in so many

other obvious directions—this enumeration of *the Physician's Opportunities*.

How far *our* Beloved Physician, by improving these, won his way to your hearts, and to the place he holds in your memories, I have left it to yourselves to decide.

But he was the Beloved Physician of my home, as well as yours ; and my heart craves the privilege of a few closing words, more directly and personally of him.

As to the professional skill which nature, study, long experience and observation gave him, I and mine have the best reason to estimate it highly ; and it would seem to need no better testimony than that of the hundreds of families who, through so many years, trusted their health and life in his care.

Medical systems and medical practitioners are matters about which men widely differ. It is their right. They ought to have an intelligent preference as to the system and the man, that are to be entrusted with interests so precious.

But it is not necessary that, in selecting one, others should be depreciated. And I think the adherents of all systems among us, will be ready to allow that Doctor FEARING honestly held to the truth of his own, which he had thoroughly studied and had so long tested ; that he faithfully practiced it to the very best of his ability, and with an intensity of devotion which few have equalled, and which none could surpass. For he gave to his patients all his time and strength and skill, never sparing himself by day or night, however much his own overworked and never very vigorous system needed rest.

The unprecedented fact that for twenty of the thirty-seven years of his practice, he pursued his daily round

of service, without one day's respite, proves that he did not mean to endanger others by sparing himself. While we cannot approve such an almost presumptuous overtasking of his powers—such as he would not countenance in another—we can, at least, honor the motive that led him so unselfishly to devote himself to the relief of others, at the risk of shortening his own life.

Nor was his conscientious faithfulness in attendance in the sick room more marked than the considerate kindness of his manner. His own sufferings taught him to sympathize with those of others. Cases of dangerous sickness weighed on his mind as if they were in his own family. They depressed his spirits; yet did not warp his judgment nor slacken his efficiency.

These long years have closely identified him with many of your families. He knew many of you better than did any one else out of your own households.

Was he ever unfaithful to that trust? I know that many members of your families have been greatly profited;—has ever one of them been injured, by his familiar domestication with you?

How foreign from all our ideas of him would have been any impropriety of conduct—any impurity, or even indelicacy, of word or act.

I have never heard, that even in this censorious world, where the innocent do not always escape calumny, his moral purity or integrity was doubted.

I have his dying testimony, that he bore no ill-will to any; “nor,” said he, “do I know that I have an enemy. I am not aware that I have given cause for enmity; and if any man harbors it towards me, I wish not to know who he is.”

He was a man of peace. The money that he so la-

boriously earned, was paid him willingly, or not at all. He would rather be without his dues than obtain them by process of law.

As to his charities, their record is on high: it is in the treasured memories of the man, which the inmates of many a home of poverty will cherish until death; it is in families that he attended when himself battling for a position of self-support, and which he would not leave when the Lord gave him a competence; but, against the advice of friends who would have spared his over-wrought body and mind, gratuitously served and pecuniarily assisted, till death took him from them.

But for the testimony which his sickness and death have elicited, I fear that in the matter of his benefactions, not even his friends would have done him full justice; for he was as skillful to conceal his charities as some are to evade them.

And but for this testimony, we might not have known the faithful christian services with which he seconded his professional labors among the poor and neglected.

Kept, to a great extent, from our Sabbath worship, and wholly from our devotional meetings, by the exigencies of his calling; naturally extremely reserved as to his inmost feelings; careful never to obtrude his sentiments where they did not seem called for; never assuming the place of a religious teacher of those who had one,—he yet was ready when occasion demanded, by religious instruction and prayer, to lead and assist the suffering, dying poor, to lay hold on that divine strength of Jesus on which he rested his own hope of salvation. What invaluable help to pastors is it in the

power of physicians to render—yea, what useful pastors they may make themselves !

In the last letter which Paul wrote from this Roman prison, only a few weeks before his martyrdom, are the touching words, “ Only Luke is with me.” All but his beloved physician had at last forsaken him. And so, among those who have already greeted our brother in the realms of glory, there may be some whom he alone attended, at once with professional and christian faithfulness, as they stood face to face with the King of Terrors.

Must it not have been an over-payment for all his self-denying life, to hear from the Master’s approving lips—“ Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, ye did it unto me !”

We shall see him on earth no more ; no more in this sanctuary ; no more along these streets on his errands of mercy ; no more in our homes and by our couches of sickness, will that familiar face cheer us.

In that beautiful home, where we had hoped that, gradually laying aside his labors, he was to enjoy yet many years of comparative rest and quiet, his coming footstep and cheerful greeting will be listened for in vain.

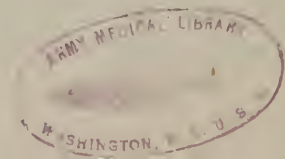
Sadly will they miss him too, in that other home, where his daughter and her companion, with their little ones, so welcomed his frequent coming.

Into their special sorrow, who bewail the loss of a Brother, a Husband, a Father, we must not intrude. “ The heart knoweth its own bitterness.” But, in sympathy with them, many families of this city—and es-

pecially we of this church and congregation—will not cease to mourn for him, nor to cherish in our hearts his memory, as that of

THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN !

- “ Rest for the toiling hand,
Rest for the anxious brow,
Rest for the weary, way-worn feet,
Rest from all labor now ;—
- “ Rest for the fevered brain,
Rest for the throbbing eye ;
Through these parched lips of thine no more
Shall pass the moan or sigh.
- “ Soon shall the trump of God
Give out the welcome sound,
That shakes thy silent chamber-walls,
And breaks the turf-sealed ground.
- “ Ye dwellers in the dust,
Awake ! come forth and sing.
Sharp has your frost of winter been,
But bright shall be your spring.
- “ ’T was sown in weakness here ;
’T will then be raised in power :
That which was sown an earthly seed,
Shall rise a heavenly flower ! ”—BONAR.



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